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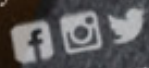
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MotoGP

Back again...

MotoGP hasn't seen too much of Dani Pedrosa in a campaign that started with surgery for arm-pump. His 50th Grand Prix win and 27th in MotoGP came through some shrewd judgement in front of HRC top brass at Motegi last weekend. Now thirty years old it seems that '26' still has the goods

Photo by Repsol Honda





Back again (2)...

It's hard to believe that last week's Red Bull Straight Rhythm was James Stewart's first competitive outing in 2015. 29 years old the Suzuki man is in a strange void in his career. There are plenty of questions to be answered through his speed and motivation and indeed the reaction of fans and industry to his return to Supercross

Photo by RedBull Content Pool/Tedesco



AMA-MX





Back again (3)...

MXGP World Champion Romain Febvre is not too fond of talking about his break from the sport and brief dalliance with Supermoto in his teenage years but there is little doubt that the 23 year old knows his way around the asphalt. '461' finished second at the Superbiker at Mettet last weekend: an event he had previously won twice in the last three years

Photo by Monster Energy/Desmet



MX





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MotoGP

MOTUL GRAND PRIX OF JAPAN

MOTEGI • OCTOBER 11th • Rnd 15 of 18

MotoGP winner: Dani Pedrosa, Honda

Moto2 winner: Johann Zarco, Kalex

Moto3 winner: Niccolò Antonelli, Honda



THE FIRST OF THE FLYAWAY TRIPLE FELL TO HONDA WITH DANI PEDROSA BECOMING JUST THE FOURTH WINNER THIS YEAR THROUGH DAMP CONDITIONS AT MOTEGI. JOHANN ZARCO FINALLY CLOSED A COMPREHENSIVE MOTO2 CAMPAIGN WITH HIS FIRST TITLE (AND THAT FOR FRANCE SINCE 2008) WHILE HONDA'S NICCOLÒ ANTONELLI PICKED HIS SECOND MOTO3 WIN AND FOURTH PODIUM FROM THE LAST FIVE

PAN

MotoGP JPN

Blogs by Gavin Emmett & David Emmett, Photos by Repsol Honda,
www.yamahamotogp.com, Ducati Corse Press, Milagro, Monster Energy,
RedBull Content Pool/Gold and Goose, Ajo Motorsport

PEDROSA DELAYS YAMAHA FACE-OFF

Who is feeling the pressure first?
Rossi undoubtedly has more experience in toying with rivals until the wire but Lorenzo can now attack with the knowledge he has little to lose. As BT Sport's Gavin Emmett points out: he needs Rossi to finish lower than second at least once even if he triumphs in Australia, Malaysia and Valencia



MOTUL GRAND PRIX OF JAPAN







A first title for France since Mike Di Meglio in 2008 and the first in Moto2. Johann Zarco is only the sixth rider from his country to toast championship success and did it with his Ajo Motorsport Kalex winning seven times and finishing off the podium only twice all season. Tito Rabat's inability to start at Motegi made Zarco's No.1 plate a formality



MotoGP JPN



Marquez finished off the box for the eighth time in 2015. The Catalan admitted his left hand injury did not bother him as much as a lack of edge with set-up for the damp conditions



Bradley Smith emerges into the light. The Yamaha rider is almost certain of finishing the year as 'top Brit' and needs to chip away at Pedrosa (two points ahead) to make the top five of the standings



LORENZO'S BACK FOOT?

By Gavin Emmett



With three rounds to go in the MotoGP World Championship, the likelihood of a tenth title for Valentino Rossi gets ever closer. What seemed a pipe dream in the early stages of the season, now looks like a Hollywood film in the making.

Things just seem to be going the Italian's way. The tracks at which he has generally struggled – like Silverstone and Motegi – he has come away smelling of roses thanks to adverse weather conditions (and in no small part his vast experience). At others there has been outside 'assistance', such as Lorenzo crashing at Misano when it seemed his own mistake would prove costly, or Marquez slipping up at Aragon when he was set to lose even more points to his team-mate and rival.

That's not to say that Rossi would not be a deserving winner, quite the opposite in fact. His victories scrapping hard with the outgoing champ in Argentina and Holland were vintage affairs, and the ante was upped again after another consummate performance in Japan, which began with his pace during qualifying.

The Spanish media had gone into a wild overdrive on Saturday night in Japan on hearing Lorenzo ranting despite having clinched an impressive pole. He was seething about Rossi being able to share his data and following riders around the track (even though the veteran's best lap came alone). He was in sheer disbelief that his fellow Yamaha man was able to get within a tenth of his best. It felt as if he was battling his own mental demons.

What followed in the race was another moment when the Mallorcan must have been thinking about the mirrors he'd smashed or black cats he'd inadvertently run over. He had the race sewn up if the rain had continued to fall in Motegi, but having pushed hard early on and the surface beginning to dry, he had used his tyres up too quickly and was forced to relent his pace.

He eventually succumbed to both Pedrosa and Rossi, and was on the losing side yet again.

All his race wins in 2015 have come from the front when he hasn't been challenged by another rider. It is a hallmark of his career in fact, and perhaps his only weakness is struggling when chasing, and for me that's the problem. I can't help thinking that Lorenzo has found himself chasing everything a little bit this year, both on track and off it.

On the asphalt his ability to even get to the front was found wanting in the early part of the year and although his fightback meant that Rossi and he were level on points at Silverstone, he has never quite been able to put a metaphorical wheel ahead of the Doctor.

Off it the drama surrounding his shoulder injury pre-Japan, sustained during a mini-motocross accident at Sete Gibernau's end of summer barbecue, became a chance for him to play the role of underdog on his terms. Possibly a great ploy if he took the win everyone was predicting had the clouds stayed away. However it wasn't to be and in the end he will have been wiping away his tears with the scarf he was using throughout the weekend as his sling.

Whether he should even have been entertaining a mess-about on a dirt-bike when a title tilt is in full throes is another matter (that's for another time and another blog – but I don't reckon the multi-million dollar sponsors would have been happy to hear it), but he now needs to throw all his energies into making these last three races his own – without a thought to what Rossi is doing or saying.

It's something we know he is well capable of, but sadly for him things have been taken out of his hands for the first time – Rossi can finish second in all three remaining events and still be crowned champion. Lorenzo's chasing could well be in vain yet again.



NICKY HAYDEN ON THE CHANGING CHAPTERS...

The USA's last World Champion is leaving the MotoGP paddock after a career that began with a first term with Honda back in 2003. I remember the Kentuckian walking around the MXGP paddock at Namur that year fresh-faced as a Grand Prix rookie and thirteen

Best memories...

No doubt, the best memory of my MotoGP career is winning the title in 2006. Winning my home GP twice [in 2005 and 2006] at Laguna Seca was incredible but nothing compares to the feeling of being World Champion. I believed in my chances, fought hard to the end and it was my season.

The future...

I have been very fortunate in MotoGP, I have been lucky enough to have a long and successful career, competing for major factories and in the biggest teams. Now I have the opportunity to keep my connection with Honda and take on a new challenge. I am really motivated to head to Superbikes, which is where I came from and where everything started for me. Hopefully I can adapt quickly and enjoy myself.

Objectives...

It is too soon to talk about the future but my ultimate objective is to go to World Superbikes and win the title, to become the first rider ever to win both the MotoGP and World Superbike Championships. Anyway, let's not get carried away. First of all I need to get there and see how competitive I can be. The first season won't be easy, I will have to adapt, but I hope to be fighting at the front in 2017.

A fond farewell...

Yes, I want to thank everybody for the affection they have shown me. I have really enjoyed my time in MotoGP, I have had thirteen excellent years here and I achieved my dream of becoming World Champion. I would have liked to

seasons on he is still one of the more popular athletes in the MotoGP series. His current Aspar team issued this Q+A at Motegi last weekend where he announced his departure to World Superbike in 2016 at the age of 34

have won more races and been more successful but I put a star on my bike, competing at a very high level. This is a great paddock, full of excellent people, and I am lucky to have made a lot of friends here. MotoGP is in great shape right now, the championship is very competitive, the circuits are getting safer and the bikes are evolving. I think Dorna are doing a great job and thanks to them our sport is more popular and exciting than it ever has been. I am looking forward to seeing how the 2015 season finishes. I want to say thanks to all the fans who have followed me over the years and also thank all the teams I have worked with.

The last American...

I feel very proud of my background and of my success. It is a big thing to be the last American in MotoGP, I am passionate about motorcycles and that is a big part of why I have been around for so long. I have had factory contracts in the past and I have been able to make a good living. I could be at home with my feet up but I am still here, giving it my best shot every weekend. I love the sport, I love the fans and above all I love racing. I had the opportunity to take a role as a test rider but my objective was to keep racing.

Superbikes...

New challenges, new circuits, new rivals, new tyres... It is a long time since I raced a Superbike but I remember it and I guess that should make it easy to switch back. There is a lot to learn but that is a big motivation. I hope to have fun and achieve great results.





Antonelli (top) takes his second Moto3 win in the last five rounds while brandmate Danny Kent played it safe in sixth position and is now on the verge of being the first British World Champion this century

CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

MotoGP RESULT

Riders

1	Dani Pedrosa, SPA	Honda
2	Valentino Rossi, ITA	Yamaha
3	Jorge Lorenzo, SPA	Yamaha
4	Marc Marquez, SPA	Honda
5	Andrea Dovizioso, ITA	Ducati

MotoGP CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER 15 of 18 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Valentino Rossi	283
2 Jorge Lorenzo	265
3 Marc Marquez	197
4 Andrea Iannone	172
5 Dani Pedrosa	154

Moto2 RESULT

Riders

1	Johann Zarco, FRA	Kalex
2	Jonas Folger, GER	Kalex
3	Sandro Cortese, GER	Kalex
4	Azlan Shah, MAL	Kalex
5	Hafizh Syahrin, MAL	Kalex

Moto2 CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER 15 of 18 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Johann Zarco	309
2 Tito Rabat	206
3 Alex Rins	189
4 Sam Lowes	152
5 Jonas Folger	145



Moto3 RESULT

Riders

1	Niccolò Antonelli, ITA	Honda
2	Miguel Oliveira, POR	KTM
3	Jorge Navarro, SPA	Honda
4	Isaac Vinales, SPA	KTM
5	Zulfahmi Khairuddin, MAL	KTM

Moto3 CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER 15 of 18 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Danny Kent	244
2 Enea Bastianini	188
3 Miguel Oliveira	179
4 Niccolò Antonelli	161
5 Romano Fenati	155

UNTIL THE BITTER END...?

By David Emmett

It has been one hell of a MotoGP season so far, one of the very best since I first started writing about MotoGP. That was in 2006, and though the racing was mostly better in that year, the championship seems to carry much more tension this season. It helps that the protagonists are more evenly matched in 2015, with Valentino Rossi and Jorge Lorenzo both being on the same bike, in the same team, and on the same tyres, while in 2006, Rossi faced Nicky Hayden who was on a Honda, rather than being a rival on a Yamaha. Rossi's main foe in 2006 seemed to be his bike, rather than the American. That year's version of the M1 suffering chatter bad enough to destroy a tyre in China, blow an engine in both Le Mans and Laguna Seca, and generally misbehaving in the first half of the campaign. Meanwhile, Nicky Hayden led the championship through sheer consistency, always on the podium, and bagging two victories to help him into the lead.

The biggest difference between 2006 and 2015 is that both Rossi and Hayden were extremely likeable. Rossi was then as much a sports phenomenon as he is now, a rider whose name and reputation rises above the discipline and is recognised globally. Hayden was a favourite among racing fans, his cheeky style and charm endearing him to men and especially women around the globe. Now, Rossi faces Lorenzo, and while Rossi remains as adored as ever, the fans have never really embraced Lorenzo in the way he wanted. He's admired for his ability and liked well enough but I never get the sense that he is truly loved. I have seen grown women break down in tears when they get close to Valentino Rossi. The most I have seen when Jorge Lorenzo appears is enthusiasm.

Then there's the fact that Rossi and Lorenzo have history between them as teammates. Rossi allegedly tried to stop Yamaha from signing Jorge Lorenzo for the 2008 season. In the middle of 2007, when rumours of Lorenzo replacing Colin

Edwards for the following year were running rampant (and rightly so – the contract had already been signed by then), Edwards was telling reporters off the record that there was no way that Lorenzo would be joining Rossi in the factory Yamaha team, as Rossi had told Yamaha he would not stand for it. Yamaha rightly ignored Rossi and signed the young Spaniard. Their faith, and Rossi's fears, were confirmed from the very start of the 2008 season. Lorenzo took pole in the first three races of the year, finished on the podium in his first two races, and won the third.

Rossi had already won a small victory of sorts, however. After being crushed by a rampant Casey Stoner the year before, the Italian had engineered a switch in 2008 from Michelin tyres to the Bridgestones the Australian had won the title with. As Lorenzo raced on Michelins, Rossi asked for a total separation of the garages and his wish was granted. A wall, physical and virtual, was placed between the two sides of the Yamaha pit box, and though the physical wall was little more than a large sheet of plastic plate with stickers on, the virtual firewall preventing data flowing from one side of the garage to the other was impenetrable. Rossi was determined that Lorenzo should learn as little as possible from him, and could justify the veto because of they were using two different brands of tyre.

Rossi's carefully laid plan fell apart in 2009 after mass defections to Bridgestone caused the spec tyre rule to be instituted. He had in part made a rod for his own back, his switch to the Japanese tyres causing the rest of the field to consider their options and follow his lead. Rossi tried to maintain the wall for 2009, but Yamaha refused. They had, and still have, a policy of data sharing, under which all four Yamaha riders – factory and satellite – can see each other's data. Rossi was not best pleased. "I was furious about this in 2009," Rossi said at Motegi, "because he learned a lot from me in the first years, how to ride the



bike, how to do the set up.” The refusal of Yamaha to bend to his will was, in the end, the reason for Rossi to leave Yamaha for Ducati, a move which would turn out to be the biggest misadventure of his career.

Since his return to Yamaha in 2013, Rossi’s attitude has changed completely. He and Lorenzo will never be friends, they both freely admit, but they coexist perfectly cordially inside the team. Two years of failure at Ducati taught Rossi a certain amount of humility (at least, as much humility as is possible for a motorcycle racer, a breed who thrive on hubris). He gained respect and understanding for what Casey Stoner had done on the Ducati, and seeing Lorenzo battle Stoner for the championship, an insight into the talent and ability of the Spaniard. Rossi no longer demanded special treatment from Yamaha, and accepted his role as teammate and partner.

For Lorenzo, the shoe is now firmly on the other foot. After he took the title in 2010, and after Rossi had announced he was off to Ducati, Lorenzo had assumed the role of lead rider in the factory Yamaha squad. The arrival of Ben Spies did nothing to change that. As impressive a rider as Spies was, he never quite made the step to ‘Alien’ status, and it was clear that Yamaha’s hopes of a title had to lay with Lorenzo. Spies’ truly horrendous second year in the factory merely cemented that informal division of roles, made even worse by his ill-advised decision to announce his resignation on Twitter. Rossi returned, but his performance in his first season was remarkably modest, leaving Lorenzo in the driving seat, and defending his second title against the record-breaking rookie season of Marc Márquez.

The balance of power started to shift last year, when Lorenzo turned up at the start of the season badly out of shape. Rossi was much stronger in his second year, beating Lorenzo to second place in the championship. Now, the two men are equal again, with Yamaha once again professing publicly and privately that they do not have a number one rider.

Once again, data sharing is becoming an issue, though this time it is Lorenzo who is complaining. He has been able to start fast at every weekend, with a good set up from the very first practice. “We always start very strong, so at the moment, sharing data is good for the team, but it is bad for me,” Lorenzo said. “This is something which won’t change, because it benefits everyone in Yamaha. But in the battle for the championship, this is helping Valentino more than me.”

The relationship between Rossi and Lorenzo is still cordial, though it is starting to fray at the edges a little. Not surprising, given the fact that there are three races left and just eighteen points separating the two Movistar Yamahas. The ebb and flow of the championship has caused friction, the upward momentum of the one rubbing against the downward descent of the other. Each time it happens, the narrative the two men provide becomes more barbed. At Motegi, Lorenzo claimed that he was the faster of the two, and that it was only bad luck that the weather kept turning against him. Rossi, in turn, said that such an attitude was disrespectful, and when asked about how he had managed tyre wear in the drying conditions, quipped: “you could say I was more intelligent, but let’s say I was more lucky.”

The atmosphere between the two will only get more fraught as Valencia approaches and the season reaches its climax. If, as looks increasingly likely, Rossi wins the championship, will this drive Jorge Lorenzo away? It is not unthinkable. Ducati Corse boss Gigi Dall’Igna has made no secret of his desire to have Lorenzo on the bike, believing it will take one of MotoGP’s four current Aliens to bring the Italian factory that elusive win. At Ducati, Lorenzo would be given a guarantee of the number one status in the team, and be handsomely rewarded with a contract probably in excess of 10 million euros a year. The fact that this is what lured Rossi to Ducati has a pleasing symmetry to it.



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FEATURE





SAM LOWES

AS SAM LOWES ENTERS THE FINAL PHASE OF HIS SOPHOMORE YEAR IN THE INTERMEDIATE CLASS OF GRAND PRIX RACING THE TALENTED BRITISH RIDER IS LOOKING FORWARD TO SOME EXCITING CHALLENGES OVER THE FORTHCOMING SEASONS. OTOR HAD AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH THE Moto2 RACER...

BRIGHT STAR

By Joseph Beale
Photos by Monster Energy

Having impressed on his 600cc Speed Up bike over the past 18 months Lowes has earned himself a ride with the Federal Oil Gresini Moto2 team for the 2016 season. He aims to challenge for the title next year on competitive Kalex package before moving up into the big time to ride for Aprilia in MotoGP from 2017.

Lowes got his first Grand Prix win under his belt earlier this year at round two at the Circuit of the Americas and having run at the front for much of the season it is an exciting time for the 25 year-old from Lincolnshire.

He sat down with OTOR for a chat as the flyaway triple header got underway in Japan, firstly commenting on how he has stepped up a notch in 2015 and how the Austin victory early in the season has been the catalyst for an upward trend in his career.

“The bike has improved from last year, especially in the back of the bike, so I think combination of one year’s experience and more confidence and feeling from the bike has helped me be in the top four or five every weekend. With the win in Austin, coming from Supersport and off a tough first season it was an amazing feeling to win my first Grand Prix and prove to a lot of people what I can do.”

Asked if it had been a frustration not to rack up more wins this year, in addition to his four podium appearances, Lowes replied, “no not really because we have had the pace many times, but you need lots of things to win here. It’s not easy and inside team we have had too many mistakes, also from my side a little bit, but we have been in a position to fight and from where we were last year this is already a massive step forwards. I am sure we will win again before the end of the season.”

On his move to the Gresini for 2016 and his ambitions for the forthcoming season he stated confidently, “Honestly I expect to fight for the World Championship. This team has done it before and I will have another year’s experience. I’ll be on more level machinery whether that’s good or bad it will be different and over 18 races will put me in a stronger position. I have a nice feeling already from our meetings and feel the team is very professional and the step I needed to make.”

Naming the riders he believes he will need to beat in order to push for next year’s Moto2 title, Lowes said, “For sure (Johann) Zarco, as he will stay as number one. (Alex) Rins will also be strong, maybe more. (Alex) Marquez will improve a lot in year two. (Danny) Kent should be fast as he will be full of confidence and has the talent. Plus all same guys as now, you can name ten potential race winners but this is Moto2 and it’s never easy.”

Lowes’ raw talent and his improvement in results in 2015 has seen Italian factory Aprilia bet on his potential as a MotoGP rider and he has faith that they can improve the competitiveness of their evolving prototype in the future. “I believe in their project and the vision they have for the new bike,” enthused Lowes. “I wouldn’t have signed to go there if I didn’t think they could fight. It’s a great company with a great history in racing and inside this paddock. I can’t wait to ride the new bike next year and I have full belief in them!”

Whilst Lowes has given British fans something to cheer in Moto2 this year, Danny Kent has been outstanding in Moto3, whilst Bradley Smith has ridden very well in the premier class, being joined by another Brit Scott Redding on the podium at Misano last month.

SAM LOWES



10

FEATURE

"TO SEE BRITISH GUYS DOING WELL IN ALL THREE CLASSES SHOWS A MASSIVE STEP FORWARD FROM THE 20 PREVIOUS YEARS..."





SAMLOWES

CONCA

Lowes is pleased to see his compatriots doing well and acknowledged, "I like Danny, he's a nice guy and is doing a great job. He knew he had to this year and he has done it, so you have to respect that! In my opinion he could have been this strong before now, but once he has that confidence, as you can see he's nearly unbeatable. Fair play to him. For me to see British guys doing well in all three classes shows a massive step forward from the 20 previous years so hopefully there can be lots more. Well done to them."

Lowes is a down to earth character and one of the most approachable riders in the paddock. Giving a glimpse of his life away from racing he commented, "I live in Derby, actually I am from Lincoln, but just live in Derby because my trainer is there. I train with my brother, a few other motorsport people and a boxer. We have good atmosphere whilst training and this helps as we are there every day. I play lots of golf to relax, I love it and it's something very different to racing. Apart from that I like to enjoy time with friends, ride off road bikes for fun and training and maybe chase some girls occasionally!"

Finally, asked for his tip on who will win the MotoGP title this year, Lowes concluded, "In my opinion it's very close. (Jorge) Lorenzo maybe is strongest guy, but I believe Valentino (Rossi) will become World Champion. For the sport this would be a fantastic result."



SAM LOWES



100%

100% started out with a line of goggles the quality and design of which have helped the firm rise the charts in terms of sales and popularity. The San Diego firm has swiftly expanded to split their attentions between Moto and Bicycle and their product range now involves a desirable collection of eyewear (performance and fashion), collectables (bags etc) and casualwear to compliment the technical items for the goggles themselves (lenses and the Forecast roll-off system). Making the most of the slant of Americana behind the brand, the t-shirts, caps, fleeces and beanies all subtle in their moto roots and wouldn't look out of place either at the track or a bar. More details, designs (including two women's garments) can be seen on the award-winning website

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BAMMING AGAIN

By Adam Wheeler
Photos by Ray Archer

JUSTIN BARCIA EMERGED FROM THE HARDEST AND MOST PAINFUL STINT OF HIS CAREER WEARING HIS COUNTRY COLOURS AND WITH HIS CHAMPIONSHIP CREDENTIALS REINSTATED AFTER A PERIOD OF JUST SIX MONTHS. IT HAS BEEN QUITE A REVERSAL FOR ARGUABLY THE MOST EXCITING AND FLAMBOYANT ATHLETE ON THE AMA SCENE AND IS PROMISING FOR THE SUPERCROSS SEASON ONLY THREE MONTHS AWAY...

JUSTIN BARCIA



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At the start of 2015 it is not unfair to say that the Justin Barcia Admiration Society might have dwindled in numbers. Leaving Honda colours for the first time in his Pro career while also in the midst of a triple-hit of injuries (his ankle last summer, chest at the Genova Supercross in the winter and then a pelvis fracture while training in California for supercross) Barcia, only 23 years old, might have had more doubters during this phase than at any other time.

He eased the pressure, doubts and boosted his morale with an encouraging summer in the Lucas Oil AMA Pro Nationals and while his other peers – especially those on the Honda machinery he bravely left behind – struggled with their own injury frustrations.

Then there was his moto victory and run at the Motocross of Nations in France: one of the best performances by a Team USA rider for almost half a decade.

If Barcia's appeal had lessened then it was hard to tell at the Alpinestars dealing signing in Rennes on Thursday prior to the Nations at Ernée. The facility was rammed with appreciative French public and '51' spent almost an hour armed with a pen and a pack of posters. He then had the first of many media duties across the weekend and OTOR slipped in with a holeshot...



JUSTIN BARCIA

Coming into the Outdoors people didn't have you pegged as a contender...

You know how this sport is. If you are not doing good one weekend then you suck. I started off a little slow but I was getting comfortable with the bike. You practice at home and you get ready with the settings but the tracks are different at the races and it takes a little time to find the race set-up and fine-tune here-and-there. People will write-you-off pretty quick but I had a nice end to the season.

Supercross. It seemed like that was one of the hardest moments of your career so far with the injury and results not coming...

Oh man. It was hard. The team signed me expecting to win and I was also expecting this but I had a terrible off-season with injuries and

little things here and there. It all sucked. Going into supercross I wasn't able to put it all together.

What's it like when a tough spell like happens? Are there a lot of doubts when you are back home?

A lot of doubting. It was hard to stay mentally strong. I made a lot of changes in my programme at that time. It was frustrating for sure and I felt crappy about the situation. Everyone in the team was saying that they still believed in me but I knew it was terrible.

Is it a different type of pressure?

Is it different. If you are leading a championship then it's because you are comfortable on your bike, doing good and can push for wins. The pressure I had was the expectation to win. I had injuries, came back and never did that great. I was never 100% ready. There was a lot of doubt in my mind. I was thinking: 'can I bounce back?' and all that stuff. I also knew that I would never give up or quit. I didn't know whether I'd be good or not for the Outdoors but at least I turned it around a little bit.

Does it help having people around to pull you out of that slump or is it something you need to do personally?

I would say it is more about me pulling myself out of a hole. Everybody deals with injuries but it got to the point where I thought 'how many more times do I want to try and come back from this?' You have those thoughts but you always come around to the fact that you love racing dirt bikes and I was able to work hard and come back. It was one of the hardest times of my career for sure.



A full-page photograph of motocross rider Justin Barcia in mid-air, performing a jump. He is wearing a red, white, and blue patterned jersey with bright green accents and various sponsor logos including "AutoTrader.com", "Yamaha", and "Leica". His helmet is also decorated with a similar pattern. The background is a large, out-of-focus crowd of spectators in a stadium setting.

JUSTIN BARCIA

**“WHEN THINGS AREN’T GOING SO WELL
THEN YOU DON’T HEAR FROM PEOPLE TOO
MUCH! THAT’S JUST HOW THE SPORT IS...
BUT I TURNED IT AROUND OUTDOORS AND
EVERYONE WAS HAPPY. ...”**

You said you changed a couple of things in your programme. An example?

Yeah, trainer-wise when I was hurt I was working with Johnny O [O'Mara] and then going into the Outdoors I started working with Buddy Antunez just on the riding. I train myself because I know what I need to do. If I don't do the work then it is my fault and not someone else's. I was staying in North Carolina a lot and not much in Florida. Just little things like that.

Why was that? Practical reasons?

Yeah, it made more sense at the time. I didn't have the bike figured out that well and the team was based there and I could test every day if I wanted to. They'd come down to Florida if I wanted but it made more sense with them having the NASCAR shop up there and all the parts to do stuff. At that point it felt like it was necessary to stay in Charlotte and fine-tune the bike and the work showed in the outdoors.

On the switch to Yamaha: is a slight myth that all the bikes are roughly the same...?

I mean, if I go to a local race and ride then I'm sure all the bikes are quite close in terms of being competitive but at a higher level there is a difference. I did not think it would be that hard to switch to another brand but it was really tough to get used to it. Now I've had a lot more time and hours on it I'm comfortable but it was a transition for sure.

Seeing what JGR put into their racing...what was your take on that? Especially coming from factory Honda...

Two different companies. Honda is huge and very corporate and Joe Gibbs is obviously a big place with a lot of NASCAR stuff going on and a lot of capabilities for the motocross team. It was definitely eye-opening to see how much work they put into the car side and how much they can take from it for motocross. It was interesting, and the team work very well. It is not so corporate and every one is on the

same page'. Everyone talks and it is easier to get things done. With a big group there is a lot of discussion – with like Japan and stuff – to get things done. At Gibbs we'll do what we want to do.

Last year at Honda you became a bit of a master of saying something...but not saying much...

Oh yeah, ha! You put it perfectly. It was tough. It is such a small sport and you don't want to talk badly about people or say bad things about bikes or anything like that. I haven't been around that long! I went Pro in '09. There have been tough times in my career...and I'm pretty open and I'll say what's on my mind but sometimes you have to take a breath.

I remember when James Stewart joined JGR he made a comment like it was a 'complete factory team' and the bike could be turned upside down if he wanted...

And they did that! They did whatever Stewart wanted while he was there. It seemed like they made him a new bike pretty much. They can do anything and it is pretty impressive. On the NASCAR side there is so much engineering going on and their guys are some of the best, and they help us.

Signing for Yamaha and becoming a Monster athlete as well it seemed like your profile was hitting new heights last autumn. Did you get that feeling?

For sure. Signing for Gibbs and Yamaha was the biggest change I had made in my career. Then I got Monster, which was awesome because I always wanted to be one of those guys. The injuries came around and supercross then went badly and I was like 'Oh man...these guys [what were they thinking...]'. I knew deep down they weren't super-pumped but they didn't show it. When things aren't going so well then you don't hear from people too much!

JUSTIN BARCIA



That's just how the sport is...but I turned it around outdoors and everyone was happy. They would have been more so if we'd taken the championship. It is a tough sport and these guys pay to win races, be 'up there', to be on TV and stuff like that and when you are not doing 'it' and from a rider's standpoint it makes you feel like crap. I feel I have made really good choices in my career and coming to Yamaha and Monster were two of those and I am really happy.

Right now how close are you to taking your Outdoor 'game' indoors?

I haven't ridden much supercross yet but I feel like we have progressed so much with the bike. In my mind it should be a lot better and I see no reason why not...we should be able to carry all this momentum into supercross. I like supercross and I'm good at it and I think we should be competitive.

You have become known as a rider who is open to different stuff and you've been a regular at supercross races in Europe and the Nations and so on. Is that attitude remaining in place?

Being in Europe this time has been even cooler because we were given some bicycles to ride. I love cycling and being out in the countryside. I don't know...I just love being in Europe a lot maybe it is because it is such a big change to the U.S. We never know how things will go in the future but I have just re-signed for another three years and after that: who knows? Maybe some teams will read this and come and talk to me in a couple of years! It's fun coming over here and it feels like more of a laidback atmosphere. The U.S. is just so high-paced and crazy. Maybe the 'real' Europe is too, but so far I just enjoy coming over. I wish I was doing Bercy this time but I've decided to skip everything this year to focus more on the supercross season for '16.





JUSTIN BARCIA

STEVE MATTHES ON JB...

“2015 was turning out to be a disaster for JGR Yamaha’s big signing. Showing speed in supercross early on, he couldn’t get his customary starts and struggled before getting hurt. Coming back for the nationals, Barcia wasn’t setting the world on fire until the rains came down at Budds Creek at round five of the Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championships. On a track that was a mess, Barcia dominated the second moto and pulled out a very unlikely 3-1 overall win in the 450 class. After that he was a changed man and the only one who could keep Ryan Dungey in check. That win sparked something in the former wild child of the sport. He kept up that momentum the rest of the summer, took some more wins and ended up on Team USA at the Motocross of Nations. Initially it didn’t look great but by the end of the national series, JGR locked Barcia up for additional years and he’s appeared to have found a home.”



NO SHO

SANDMONSTER

—
Shaun Simpson
MXGP Winner
UK MX1 Champion 2014 & 2015

▶ SHAUN SIMPSON

ART CUTS

WAIT 'TIL NEXT YEAR...! (PART TWO)

By Steve Matthes

Yeah, yeah I know the 69th annual Motocross des Nations is already two weeks old and you're tired of discussing it. I get that but what we're seeing at this race is a bit of a switch from the norm for someone like me that's been going to this race for a long time now. It's now four years in a row the red, white and blue boys haven't been able to win this thing after basically dominating it every year since 1981. Team USA had an over 80% winning percentage since that year that Decoster brought his Honda boys but these last four have really put a dent into that stat.

And next year with the race in Maggiora, I don't think the USA will be favored there either unless Johnny O'Mara brings out his trusty CR125. Nope, you'll have to look at Glen Helen in 2017 as a spot where the USA can get back on top at this race. So much angst amongst fans about their nations when it all boils down to one day is a bit strange but when you put that flag on, well, emotions get high.

Even though I'm Canadian (don't get me started about our issues with sending a team, it's such political bullshit that I'll end up just yelling and hitting a nearby puppy), I live in the USA and most times, the riders that end up going at guys I know fairly well. And I can come at this loss with a unique perspective as a journalist in this sport. You see, I was a mechanic for Tim Ferry at the 2003 MXDN where, and you can't blame me, USA lost. It was really cold at Zolder that day, there was a one-moto format, Carmichael kicked ass, I worked REALLY hard and felt like shit afterwards. Team USA and losing, I can type about that feeling all day long bro.

But in the end, I don't have a dog in this fight except for the fact that the after-party at the Alpinestars rig when America wins is WAY better.

"I was definitely bummed but I felt like no one totally blew it. So I felt okay. It's not like you can blame one guy" said JGR Yamaha team manager Jeremy Albrecht, himself a member of winning and losing Team USA's as a mechanic "Everyone could have done a little better. All we needed was two more positions, but I was pumped that Justin (Barcia) rode awesome, in my opinion. He rode the best I've seen him ride. Really smart, really patient. Even let Cooper (Webb) by at one point, which isn't typically the Barcia way.

I was pumped to see him really embrace the team thing. He really wanted to win. He was super bummed also. Everyone was. Jeremy (Martin) cried when he crossed the finish line because he knew we didn't kill it. We didn't do badly but we needed to do better. I think if you go off of how our guys did, sixth was our worst moto. In the past that would have won. Those guys were just that good. That was the problem."

Yeah, J Bone, those guys from France were that good and that was indeed the problem for Team USA. The third place Belgians? Nah, you had those guys covered Jeremy.

And now, not in any type of order, may I present to you Team USA excuses as to why they didn't win the MXoN:



1) Team France ALL RODE THE TRACK a couple weeks before the race. Yeah, this really happened. That's ok world, wait until Glen Helen where the USA guys will be using it as their personal Disneyland for a month before the race.

2) Team USA had this in the bag if it wasn't for the starts in the third and final moto. Justin Barcia and Cooper Webb were on it once that gate dropped in their previous races. Start them up front and it's the Star Spangled Banner baby!

3) Are we sure that Romain Febvre is actually human? Has anyone checked him out closely?

4) Jeremy Martin wasn't able to beat Marvin Musquin because he was tired FROM BEATING MARVIN ALL SUMMER LONG IN THE AMERICAN NATIONALS. Yep, that 2015 250MX National title plaque was heavy folks.

5) Team USA figured that there was no way they were getting out alive if they did actually beat France so better to just let them win.

6) Thanks to the rest of the fast guys for not getting injured and helping USA out in getting in-between France and the USA riders. This was totally sarcastic by the way.

7) It's Ben Townley's fault. He rode so well that he beat all the humans but couldn't beat the robot (Febvre) to hurt team USA.

8) I'm not sure why but the American media has been slowly trickling away from this event for the past few years. Three photographers

and myself were the only full-time journos from the land of the oversize soft drinks were there. Maybe USA needed more media types posing as cheerleaders like I saw with some other countries?

Please don't take these seriously, France won, USA lost and no one else was even close. Last time I checked the gate dropped at the same time for all the riders. See you next year everyone.





PRODUCTS





SHOEI

When it comes to helmets then there are few safer, better and more renowned names than the Japanese brand that was born in 1954 and started out manufacturing lids for construction. Shoei is a world leader in head protection and safety but – similar to Arai – is a small, personal company where the production is still based in Japan. **NXR** and X-Spirit II are the flagship full-face helmets in terms of build and 3D paddocks for a glove-like fit (we have one and can confirm what a close and reassuring fit it is).

The X-Spirit III raises the game with a six layer shell construction, modular interiors for optimal vision and fitting, three inlets and four outlets when it comes to ventilation through the new aerodynamic design sculpted for performance.

The **VFX-W** is the new off-road model. Among a dual layer liner, Quick Release Emergency System and various vents Shoei claim the VRX-W has a 'brand new shell construction, in a radical new, sporty design with integrated spoilers, for optimised aerodynamics and performance. Visor in a new design, extra large for perfect protection from sun and mud. Aggressively-shaped face guard.'

www.shoei-europe.com/uk/

SBK

FASSI FRENCH ROUND

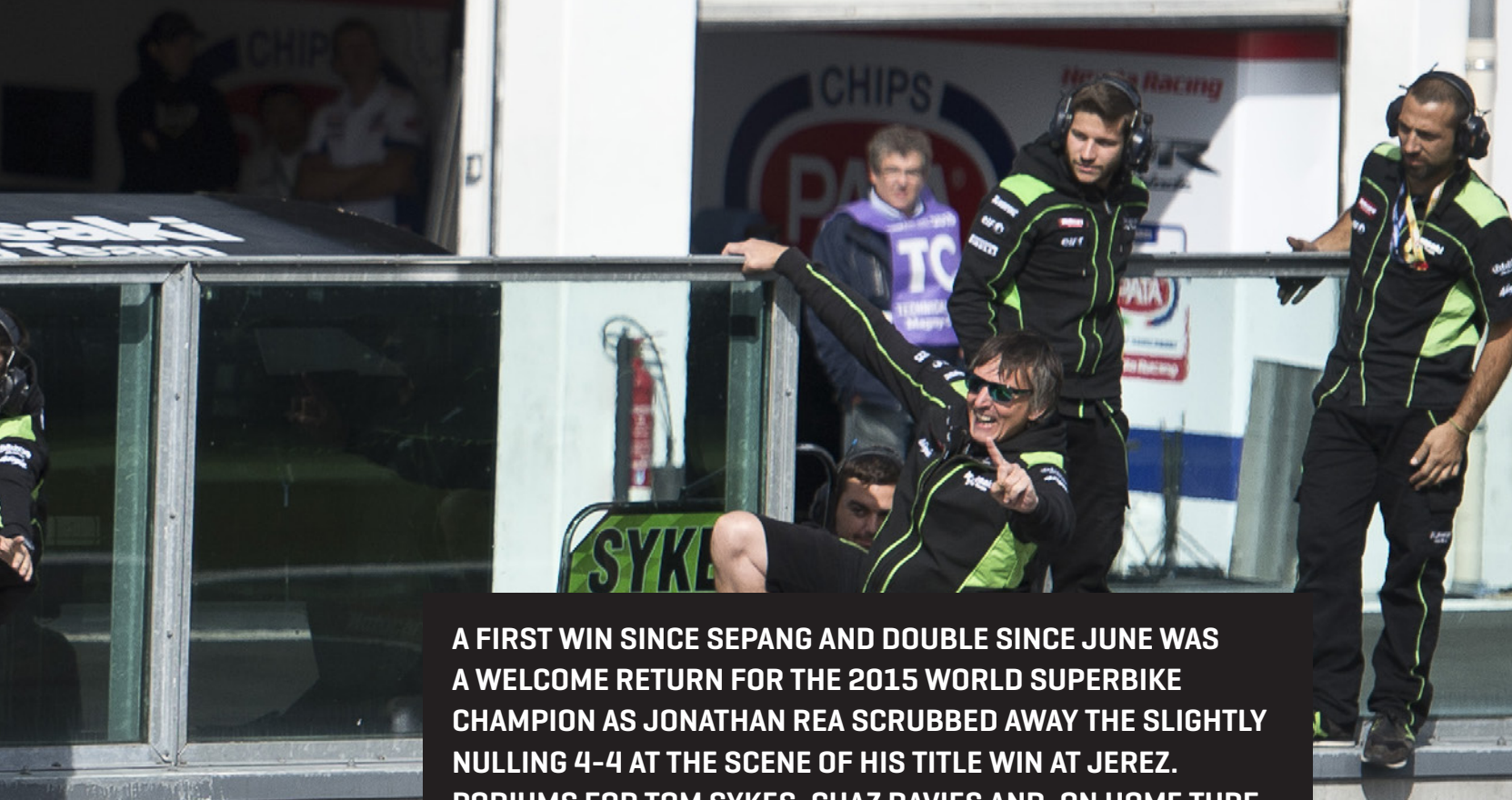
MAGNY-COURS · OCTOBER 4th · Rnd 12 of 13

Race one winner: Jonathan Rea, Kawasaki

Race two winner: Jonathan Rea, Kawasaki



WSB FRA



A FIRST WIN SINCE SEPANG AND DOUBLE SINCE JUNE WAS A WELCOME RETURN FOR THE 2015 WORLD SUPERBIKE CHAMPION AS JONATHAN REA SCRUBBED AWAY THE SLIGHTLY NULLING 4-4 AT THE SCENE OF HIS TITLE WIN AT JEREZ. PODIUMS FOR TOM SYKES, CHAZ DAVIES AND, ON HOME TURF, SYLVAIN GUINTOLI SAT BESIDE REA'S RENEWED THREAT

Blog by Graeme Brown

Photos by GeeBee/Kawasaki/Aprilia/Ducati Corse Press

RESUME REPEAT...



WSB FRA



QATAR RUMBLINGS AGAIN...?

By Graeme Brown



The weekend at Magny Cours saw Jonathan Rea dominate again on the Kawasaki. Having lost out on pole position by the slimmest of margins, he went on to record another double win and close in on Colin Edwards all time points scoring record. The two wins were pretty much what we expected to see from the form he has shown over this season but it actually raised a couple of questions.

Rea was back on the SC02 front tyre that he favours so much, after Pirelli had not given him that option in Jerez and he finished fourth in both races. Rea is pretty much the only rider that uses this front tyre and has relied on it all season. For their part Pirelli have received a lot of criticism over the years but the one thing they have always done is develop the tyres year on year. Each year they bring a new set of options at the start of the season.

As a sole supplier they cannot indulge one rider and bring a tyre just for them so if, as with Jerez, they change the SC02 option for the 2016 season some were asking if we are seeing an achilles heel for Rea. Alongside this Kawasaki have announced they will introduce a new ZX-10R for 2016. My guess is that over the winter the team will return to that 'step by step' philosophy and work through the issues to keep them at the front.

The other point that came to the fore was the ugly issue of team orders, and again an undercurrent of dissatisfaction in the green camp. As things worked out in race one, Rea could have held position in 2nd place to give Sykes a further five points in his quest to finish second in the Championship. Rea stated in the press that the issue hadn't been raised but that if it had been, as an employee of the team, he would have to consider the point. Sykes on the other hand was critical of the team, having

been quoted by Speedweek.com as saying the management had been affected by other members of the team, that prevention is better than the cure, when the team are always looking for a cure. It was a strange point to make but it was pointed out that Sykes could and should really be a three time world champion, having lost out to a bizarre half-points scoring debacle at Monza in 2012, and the well documented team orders fight with Baz last year. Rea's bold move to take over the race one lead on Sunday must have felt like deja-vu for the Brit and you could understand if he was smarting a bit.

In a way, however, this is what the Championship needs, a bit of niggles, a bit of intrigue. Look at how Valentino Rossi has rubbed people up the wrong way in MotoGP, whilst always always remaining the good guy. From Biaggi to Gibernau and now Lorenzo there is always an undercurrent of personal rivalry and that's exactly what any sporting dual needs. I have said it before but Dorna and the TV stations need to make more of this to re-kindle the wider public's interest in the series.

As for the rest of the weekend it was great to see Sylvain Guintoli back on the podium for the first time this year, and at his home race. He surely has to hope that the new Yamaha will come to the party with all the bells and whistles and he can be up there more often next year.

The merry-go-round of transfer talk was inevitable in full swing with everyone speculating on who goes where, will Aprilia run bikes at all?, can anyone afford them as privateer? What is happening at Suzuki? Bizarrely the return of both pantomime villains of Melandri and Biaggi still generate column inches but it seems unlikely that either will be in the WSBK paddock next year. But don't quote me on that!





INDIAN

Indian Motorcycles – the USA's first motorcycle company apparently – are an acquired taste but there is no doubting the Americana retro cool factor surrounding some of their apparel... even if the vast roadsters are not to your taste. From 1902 Indian entered U.S. culture and society, even becoming the NYPD's bike of choice way back in 1907 to Burt Munro's forty year old speed record in 1967 up until various guises of the company and brand surviving through to 2015 and the launch of the impressive Chief Dark Horse; Indian have always secured a small distinctive corner of motorcycling. A big focus has been made on styling and quality when it comes to a broad spread of products from tees to jackets and a wealth of accessories from the bike to the rider to the garage wall. Take a browse through the website to see more.



www.shop-indianmotorcycle.com/uk/accessories.html





CLASS

GETTING UNDER THE SKIN OF NORTON'S REJUVENATION ROLAND HEADS TO DONINGTON FOR A SPIN ON COMPANY BOSS STUART GARNER'S DOMINATOR SS; THE FIRST OF A LIMITED EDITION RUN AND SOMETHING PROTOTYPICALLY BRITISH

By Roland Brown, Photos by Phil Masters

NORTON DOMINATOR SS



It would be difficult to imagine a more quintessentially British scene. The lean, classically Sixties-style café racer propped on its sidestand, sun gleaming off a polished aluminium petrol tank that sits above a parallel twin-cylinder engine stamped with Norton's curly logo. In the background an Aston Martin, number-plate SG V8, is parked in front of a spectacular Gothic stately home, from whose turreted top floor a pair of Union Jack flags flutters in the breeze.

The initials are those of Stuart Garner, Norton's boss and the man who lives on the top floor of Donington Hall – below those flags, and above the company base from which he is crafting an unlikely success story. Round the back of the Hall, adjoining the Leicestershire circuit, new-generation Norton Commando roadsters are being hand-built, at a rate of roughly three per day, and delivered to customers worldwide. And the bike parked out front is the Dominator SS, latest sporting derivative and one of the most handsome, charismatic bikes of this or any other year.

This Dominator SS, the first to be built, is Garner's own machine and one of a limited run of 200, almost all of which are sold despite a price (£24,700 in the UK) roughly 70 per cent higher than that of the Commando. The SS, or Super Sport, is essentially a roadgoing version of the non-street-legal Domiracer that was built in even smaller numbers last year, having begun life as the personal project of Norton chief engineer Simon Skinner.

The new bike is inspired by one of the old Norton firm's greatest models: the Dominator SS of the early Sixties. The stylish, silver-tanked 646cc twin was arguably the top sporting machine of its day. Its essence is recreated by the modern SS, which uses the modern Commando's 961cc aircooled engine in standard form, but fitted with a free-breathing exhaust that

adds slightly to the maximum output of 80bhp. By contrast the frame, borrowed from the Domiracer, is completely different, with a diagonally mounted monoshock instead of the Commando's twin shocks. Its top tubes curve down at the rear in a style reminiscent of Norton's classic Featherbed design, as used by the Dominator 650SS. As well as that shapely, hand-rolled alloy petrol tank, other neat details include billet aluminium rearset footrests, drilled-for-lightness sidepanels, and a carbon-fibre single seat painted with a subtle Union Jack.

The Dominator SS is a wonderful bike simply to gaze at, and riding it does not disappoint. I threw a leathered leg over the fairly low seat, its padding just a thin piece of foam, and leant forward to a pair of low, slim, angled-back clip-on handlebars. A press of the button brought the 961cc, pushrod-operated motor to life with a deep, thunderous blast of sound (the SS also comes with homologated silencers) like something from a classic-race paddock.



NORTON DOMINATOR SS





NORTON DOMINATOR SS

**“THE REBORN DOMINATOR IS A HUGE ENTERTAINING
BIKE THAT PROVIDES SPECTACULAR PROOF OF
NORTON’S REVIVAL ...”**



The beefy parallel twin had plenty of low-rev grunt, and was very sweetly fuelled, with a light throttle action and a very responsive feel. Despite the aggressive café-racer image there was no snatchiness or hesitation; just a strong, instant punch of acceleration, combined with a deliciously broad spread of torque. And, when I shut the throttle, with another wonderful sound as the exhaust spluttered and crackled. The Dominator was always ready to shoot forward when given a tweak of its throttle. A bit of parallel-twin buzzing came through the rearsets and thinly padded seat as the tachometer needle swept towards the 8000rpm redline. This isn't a bike for motorways but it felt at home on main roads, increasing its pace towards a top speed of about 130mph. For back-road blasting it was ideal: quick enough to be exhilarating, its performance emphasised by the sound and the wind pulling at my shoulders despite the tiny carbon flyscreen.

Chassis performance was well up to the job; not surprisingly given the sturdy Featherbed-style frame, heavily-braced tubular steel swing-arm and high-quality Öhlins suspension. The blend of 17-inch front wheel and respectably sporty geometry gave sharp and accurate steering, making the Norton enjoyably agile on bumpy back-roads. Big front discs and Brembo radial calipers gave fierce stopping power, though without ABS.

The Dominator was great fun when ridden aggressively and also enjoyable at a gentle pace. There were a couple of glitches: the alloy fuel cap leaked slightly with a full tank, and the rear light vibrated loose. Hopefully Norton have sorted those issues because production of the 200 units is under way. Although most are sold, a bike like this is still available because the standard Dominator (£19,950 in the UK) can be upgraded almost to SS specification with the addition of the exhaust and alloy tank.

Either way, the reborn Dominator is a hugely entertaining bike that provides spectacular proof of Norton's revival. With Garner having recently received a £4.3 million government grant to help develop a 1200cc V4 superbike

plus a 650cc, liquid-cooled parallel-twin engine that will power a modern range of middle-weights, the future of the famous old marque looks brighter than it has since the Dominator 650SS ruled the roads half a century ago.





ROYAL ENFIELD

Despatch riding and Café Racing: these are the two 'inspirations' that Royal Enfield, a motorcycle manufacturer since 1909, state on their informative website. 'RE' is another strong example of a historic bike brand embracing the wave of cool around the custom and vintage movement that has grown strong in the last half a decade. From India they fabricate a range of accessories as well as apparel. With such an iconic image it is not difficult to boast a selection of cool t-shirts, shirts, knits, jackets and even trousers; some shown here. The accessories span belts, buffs, gloves, bags and even helmets. Overall a comprehensive collection to go with the bikes and a re-emerging company and hopefully spreading across the continents again soon

www.store.royalenfield.com/





BACKPAGE

Monster Energy Girls
By Ray Archer







'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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